***Wisdom and Morality

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-221***

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Our topic is "The Mystery of the Church," No. 36 in Colossians 1:25-29.

The apostle Paul, as God's communicator of church-age doctrine, proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ from the issue of grace salvation to the full counsel of Bible doctrine truth. Paul, furthermore, admonished the converts of his witnessing to warn them of losing their temporal fellowship with the Father, through sin that remains unconfessed. Every convert, further, was taught God's principles of doctrine.

**Wisdom**

The content of Paul's message was the wisdom of God provided for the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ for His life here on this earth. That same divine viewpoint wisdom is ours. This refers to God's point of view that forms our values and our standards of life. The wisdom of divine viewpoint, we have pointed out, comes only from God through Scripture. So, doctrine provides the believer with the mind of God himself.

**Divine Wisdom vs. Human Viewpoint Wisdom**

Now, divine viewpoint wisdom can only come from God. Human viewpoint wisdom comes from Satan. Therefore, divine viewpoint wisdom cannot be found through philosophic speculations and morality. "How should we, then, live" cannot be decided by a 51% vote of society. Now, you may think that that's a simple statement. No, of course not. What most people think does not determine what is true with God, and how we should conduct ourselves. But you should not be surprised to find, even many church people, who think that whatever the trend of society is, that's what's in with God. And that is not true. So, the word "wisdom" has enormous significance. It is that divine viewpoint frame of reference that only comes from God. What Satan produces in human viewpoint is foolishness, and it brings grief and destruction. It is simple stupidity. Now, God freely gives wisdom through the grace system of perception to those who seek it. So, the Scriptures tell us that, if you want wisdom, follow the pattern, and follow the provision, and you shall have it.

Now, the wisdom that comes from God is received on the basis, first of all, of our fear of the Lord, which brings respect for God's laws. Secondly, those who are negative to God's wisdom, as expressed in Scripture, for life and conduct, never enjoy divine direction. Their lives are always muddling around in the wrong direction. They never find genuine satisfaction in life. And then they cannot find any real answers to the problems that come in life inevitably, and that Satan throws in their way.

So, God's wisdom is essential for survival in the devil's world. The skeptics always think and live like the worldlings of Satan. So, they end life (at the judgment seat of Christ) as losers, and they go into eternity with a whimper instead of with a shout of victory in Christ.

**What is Wisdom?**

Continuing on the principles of wisdom, then, we must also point out that wisdom is to be esteemed by believers. Success in one's life, in terms of the long haul of eternity is entirely dependent on the possession of God's wisdom values. This is doctrine, stored in that human spirit, that the spirit of God can bring to your attention. The Scriptures admonish us (the Christian) to simply fall in love with wisdom. That is a marvelous, wonderful piece of advice. The Bible tells us that where our treasure is, there is where our love will be. What we love – that's what's going to be our treasure. And if wisdom is what we love, then that's what we are going to treasure.

Proverbs 4:5-13 puts it this way, "Acquire wisdom (acquire understanding). Do not forget nor turn away from the words of My mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will guard you. Love her (that is, wisdom), and she'll watch over you." The beginning of wisdom is: acquire wisdom; and, with all you're acquiring, get understanding: "Prize her, and she will exalt you. She will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a garland of grace. She will present you with a crown of beauty. Hear, My son, and accept My sayings, and the years of your life will be many." Aha!

People who have wisdom are most likely to have good health. They're most likely to have bodies that keep clicking and functioning. There is a great physical impact upon those who have divine viewpoint in their minds. And the Bible, on several occasions, ties the two together as we do here: "Hear, My son, and accept My sayings, and the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded, and if you run, you'll not stumble. Take hold of instruction (instruction in doctrine). "Do not let her go. Guard her, for she is your life."

Wisdom is my life? That means that I have to be more worried about missing a church service, where instruction of wisdom is being given, than about earning money, and than about getting some material thing. I have to certainly give as much concern to being on hand for the instruction in the Word of God as for whatever I do in my business; my employment; and, my dealings on a material level. That's exactly right. But if you fall in love with wisdom, then life is guided in a rational way that only God can provide.

**Understanding is Good Judgment**

Another point is that wisdom is the mental attitude of trust in God's value, and it's the abhorrence of evil. Let's go back to the great book of wisdom. In Job 28:28, Job puts it this way: "And so, to man he said, 'Behold the fear of the Lord. That is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding.'" We are to be respectful that God is the Creator. Therefore, He tells us what's right and what's wrong. No matter who the important person is that plays a different game, and says that it can be done otherwise, he's not telling the truth: "To man," God said, 'behold the fear of the Lord. That is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding." That means good judgment. Understanding is good judgment.

**Joshua**

Then we have one point more. Wisdom is required of government leaders in the administration of their duties, exercising public authority and power. When Israel was put together as a theocracy of God, for those who were going to be in authority, making the rules in the civil authority, Deuteronomy 34:9 said, "Now Joshua, the son of Nun, was filled with the Spirit of wisdom. For Moses had laid his hands on him, and the sons of Israel listened to him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses."

**Joshua**

Joshua came on the scene to replace Moses as leader of the Exodus generation. Moses went through the ceremony of laying hands upon him, under God's direction. And Joshua was one of the few people of the Old Testament who had the spirit of God permanently indwelling him. That is commonplace with us today. It was not in that day. But Joshua was now going to be the man to lead the nation. And if there was one thing he needed, he needed to have God the Holy Spirit providing him with the frame of reference of divine viewpoint wisdom. So, he received it. Then the people of Israel recognized that this man spoke with the Word and the frame of reference of God's truth. Therefore they listened to him, and they followed him. And if he did not, then they should not have done that. We have that same principle today.

**Solomon**

Wisdom makes a man respected in society. And the opposite is also true. One who does not demonstrate wisdom (divine viewpoint conduct) is a man that is not held in esteem in a society that has the values of God. 1 Kings 3:2: "When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down." This is referring to King Solomon. This is the incident where one woman had turned over on her baby and smothered it. She substituted it for a roommate's baby, and gave her dead baby to the roommate. But the mother of the living child was able to discern that the dead baby was not hers, but the living one was hers. So, Solomon came, and was asked, as king, to judge between them.

Now, how are you going to do this? It was wonderful living in a theocracy, because you had direct communication from God. It was God speaking in a very clear way. Ours comes very clearly too. We have a discerning mine. We have that intuitive leading of the spirit of God, and I can't tell you how many times this week I've had occasion to have that intuitive idea, and I'm so busy that I'm going to pass it by, and I say, "Whoop, wait a minute! What God has now intuitively called to your mind, do it." And I'll be: every time I would've been wrong had I ignored it. So, He speaks to us, but not in that dramatic fashion that God spoke to Solomon.

So, Solomon had this great judgment: "When all Israel had heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice." To resolve this dispute between these two mothers, Solomon said, "Let's just cut the living baby in half, and each of you can have half of it." Then he watched the faces of the women. The woman who was lying said, “That's fair." The woman who was the real mother said, "Never mind. Let her have the child." And Solomon said, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom of God, "You are the true mother.

Now, the reason that he was able to do this was because he had God's frame of reference. He had God's wisdom. In 1 Kings 3:10-12 is that wonderful passage when God said to Solomon, "What do you want? You're starting your administration. You're starting your reign. What do you want? What did Solomon do? Solomon, in verse 9, recognized that he was like a child. He was to lead a very great people – the people of Israel. They were a people who had a great future. Through them would come to savior of all mankind.

So, in 1 Kings 3:9-11 Solomon said, "So, give your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge the great people of Israel?" And God said to him: "It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon asked for this thing. God said to him, 'Because you have asked this thing (wisdom), that he would have discernment and understanding." Solomon said, "I want the mind of God." And God said, "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have you asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, Behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart (mentality), so that there has been no one like you before, in wisdom, nor shall one like you arise after you."

So, Solomon was the one person in the human race who had an enormity of the mind of God. It was commonplace to him. And God said, in 1 Kings 3:13-14, "I've also given you what you have not asked for: both riches, and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days. And if." Now, here's the condition: "If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days." And the implication was that all of his days would be prosperous and happy.

Well, the sad thing is that this man, who had more wisdom of God in him than any man ever before or since, did not walk in his ways. He went negative. And that should cause us to have little concern. If Solomon, with such a splendid beginning, could go so far astray that he could sit down and write the book of Ecclesiastes in which he listed all of the nonsense of his life, and all of the human-viewpoint thinking that he had, and all of the ways he thought he was going to find happiness, only to find that it was blowing wind, and it didn't mean anything.

**God's Wisdom for Moral Conduct**

Now, one of the places that we must have wisdom, which I think is very pertinent in our day, is God's wisdom for moral conduct – the wisdom of God on moral issues. That is under tremendous challenge and attack today. American society has, since the 1960s, abandoned the biblical absolutes which define moral conduct and personal honor. The Bible is no longer the standard of what is right and wrong to do morally. The Bible is no longer the standard of what an honorable man or an honorable woman will do. The moral code, such as the Ten Commandments given to Israel, each of which, except the one about the Sabbath Day, is repeated in the New Testament of the church, was given to preserve personal and national freedom.

**Morality Today**

These moral principles today are viewed by people as a denial of their personal liberty, and they're considered outdated for modern times. So, do not be shocked, and do not be amazed, that, even within church groups, you will find people who agree with the world system. What was once the absolutes of right and wrong, such as expressed in the Ten Commandments, and repeated in the New Testament, no longer apply. But what is right and wrong, and that upon which we must act, is what people accept.

So, if God says that homosexuality is a very grievous sin, and a great abomination, but most people say that it's all right, and they accept it, then you must go along with it, and that establishes the code of your society. That is not true. The absolutes of right and wrong, established by the Creator, reflecting His own character, are not changeable. And I won't go into the details of how people get around these things. But what was previously unthinkable conduct, as being totally immoral, human wisdom now views as a good and liberating thing.

**Isaiah**

Now the prophet Isaiah made an observation about that, because God gave him an insight on this, since these things were happening in Israel itself, just as it is in our day. So who decides evil? The Creator does, because whatever is against His character, that's the evil. And what is the good? That is determined by the character of God. Whatever God is, is what is good. Isaiah 5:20, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who substitute darkness for light, and light for darkness; and, who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

That's what's happening in American society today. And that's why we have come to the very edge (if not already crossed the Rubicon, never to return), where the judgment of God is so upon us, that God has abandoned this nation. Everywhere in our country today, people are calling what God says is evil as good, and people are calling good what God says is evil. And people are substituting the darkness of human viewpoint from Satan for the divine-viewpoint wisdom of the light of doctrine that God has given. They're substituting that for the darkness. They're substituting what is bitter in human experience, which is what human viewpoint brings you (it is always bitter), for the sweet honey of the Word of God. And they're taking, instead of God's sweet Word, the bitter words of Satan. They're doing exactly what Eve did all over again. Was that a good thing for her to do? Have we all been profited by the fact that Eve called good what God called evil?

In Proverbs 17:15, we have another piece of wisdom on this: "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD." Are conservative Christians being condemned in our society today? Are those who are the liberals, who reject the authority of the Word of God, and who have nothing but contempt for the Christians (for those who are decent people, oriented to the mind of God), are they the ones who are considered the abomination? No: "Those who justify the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, here's your future: both of them alike are an abomination to God. And I remind you that the word "abomination" in the Hebrew is an emotional word. It is the most disgusting loathing thing. And some of you have been telling me of what you've been seeing on the television news (on the screen), of what is going on in American society today. And you've used this very concept. You've said, "It makes me want to throw up." That's what "abomination" means. Or some of you have said, "It just turns my stomach. That's what "abomination" means.

So, what was previously unthinkable, in American society, the most terrible things are now accepted. So, there are no longer absolutes of what is right and what is wrong in personal conduct. It depends upon the individual to decide what is okay for him, and what is not. All acts are now viewed as being neutral, and are to be evaluated by the situation of the moment.

A few years ago this was called "existentialism:" the existence of the moment determines what is right and wrong at that moment. The next moment, it may not be right. So, everything was neutral.

So, you might come to a street corner, and there stands a little old lady. The traffic is flying back and forth in every which way, and you, having been a boy scout in your younger days, know that here's a good deed you could perform – helping this old lady across the street. So, you do that. And you get her safely over to the other side. At that existing moment, that is a good deed. But if you stand there, and instead, you choose to take the little old lady, and give her a boot right out into the traffic, when everything is thundering down; she gets run over, and stomped on, and bounced over (in the existence of the moment, you felt that that was the thing to do), that also is now acceptable. At that moment, that becomes a good deed. So, sometimes you can't even trust the scouts, if there they're existentialists. You never know how they may feel at any particular moment.

**What Can I Get Away With?**

Now that's what we mean by there being no absolutes of what is right all the time, and what is wrong all the time. But the Scriptures, in the commandments of the moral code, say that it is always wrong to do certain things; and, it is always right to do other things. But all acts are now viewed as neutral, whether it be lying, cheating, murder, fornication, stealing, or cannibalism. They're all okay. There is not any one of these such that you can say that they are really always wrong. What this amounts to is determining the moral code by whatever you can get away with. And that's what it is with most people – determining the moral code on the basis of what I can get away with.

That is the way of life of many people. When they wake up in the morning, they say, "What can I get away with today?" Now they don't tell themselves: "I'm going to be a vile person." What they mean by that is: "What can I get away with, and rationalize myself, such that what is commonly viewed as being evil, in my case, it'll be good." And if you don't think that people do that, you just haven't run into somebody. I have had many shocks with individuals that were doing something that was quite wrong, by biblical standards, who actually looked me in the eye, and said, "Well, you're right about that. But in my case, God has told me that it's different, and it's okay.

Now, the Bible makes it very clear that there is only God, the Creator, Who is qualified to determine the rules of conduct in human relationships. And this comes to mankind by revelation from God. And it is recorded in Scripture as the divine absolutes for moral conduct. In Matthew 24:35, Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away." And when God declares the moral code, and these things that are right and wrong, they will not pass away. Society will not, by a 51% majority, be able to change the moral code of God. Biblical moral absolutes cannot change, for the very fact that, you will remember, one of the attributes of God is that he is immutable. He doesn't change. And since God cannot become something different than what He is, He cannot lie. 1 Peter 1:16 says, "Because it is written, 'You shall be Holy, for I am Holy." God says, "My character is what is holy. My character determines morality." So, what is right and what is wrong is a revelation from God.

Now, you might say, "Well, I can't get along in the society. I'm in a business where I'm up against people. I can't go anywhere. I can't realize my ambitions, if I follow the code of the Bible. I have to work with what people are." And I've had Christian men who have said to me, "I have to deal in my business on the basis of how the world deals. If they're sneaky; if they're deceptive; if they are misrepresenting; and, if they lie, then that's what I have to do." And I have to shake my head, and I walk outside, and I kick the dust off the back of my shoes, and I walk away from that kind of blindness, which is what you must do.

**Jochebed**

Now, the Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that God's moral laws are absolute, and they're binding at all times. And there is something more to say about this that we don't have time to get into. And you may bring those up, or somebody may bring those up to you, and say, "Hey, what about Jochebed, Moses' mother? Pharaoh said: "Kill every one of those male babies." And when the midwives were told, "You must kill those babies." They didn't. Then the Pharaoh says, "How come these boys aren't being killed?" They said, "Well, these women are strong. Before we ever get there, they've already given birth to the baby." That was a combat situation. It was the angelic conflict. And in a combat situation, you act with the enemy accordingly to deceive him.

**Rahab**

What about Rahab? She hid the two spies of the Lord, spying out the land. And when the king's men came, Rahab lied to them. She said, "They went that way" – just the opposite of where they went. That was a combat, wartime situation. But we won't get into that.

There are these features that deal with the exceptions of what God is dealing with at any particular moment. And He has covered those in the Bible doctrine of warfare. He gives us the guidance on how we shall conduct ourselves when we're in a deadly situation – in a combat situation with the enemy.

However, God made it clear that the moral laws are binding, and they're binding at all times. If there is an exception, it is by the divine will of God to accomplish a certain end.

When of the kings of the Old Testament would not listen to the truth, God said, "Fine, I'll give you a prophet that you'll listen to. And I'm going to put a demon in him, and that demon will speak, and he'll tell lies left and right." And the king believed it, and it went to his destruction. God gave him a lying spirit to believe because he would not believe it. In fact, God said, "You will not believe the truth (people at the end times), and the truth right there is that they are not gods." For example, the things that Mormonism tells you, and that Hinduism tells you: "You will not believe the truth, so I will now blind your minds, so that you will not be able to believe the truth, but you'll be only able to believe the lie.

Why is God going to do that? Well, when the antichrist comes on the scene, he will tell them, "I am God," and they'll believe the lie. But that does not change the moral code of God, which conducts the life of the believer.

In Mark 7:7-13 Jesus says, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men (human viewpoint rules for living). Neglecting the commandments of God (the 10 Commandments), you hold to the traditions of men (the 51% of people). He was also saying to them, 'You nicely set aside the commandments of God in order to keep your tradition (your human-viewpoint, your 51% majority in agreement)." That's why I tell you that, when somebody talks to you like this (when somebody comes on with this), beyond telling them as Scripture says: "We give you one chance, and maybe two" – we warned you that what you're saying is contrary to Word of God," you walk away from them. You don't talk to them anymore. You shake the dust off, and you leave him to the judgment of God, because that's where that individual is going to end up. And you don't want to get between God and His whip.

**Deceit**

Mark 7:10: "For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother, and he who speaks evil, a father or mother, let him be put to death." So, here's the rule of God – one of the commandments. But to the religious leaders he says, "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Anything of mine that you might have been helped by is Corban; that is, to say 'given to God.'''" Yes, mommy and daddy, I know you're out there in the cold. I know you need food. I know you need clothing. I know you need shelter. And I just wish I could help you more, but what can I do? Everything I have, I've given to God, and He's helping me to spend it."

And all of the religious leaders agreed to this deceit. If you wanted to get anywhere in that community of religious leaders, you better act like this, or they're not going to accept you. Is that all right for you to do – turn against the law of God?

Mark 7:12, "You no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother, thus invalidating the Word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down, and you do many things such as that." That's a very forceful statement. Jesus says, "You guys look very impressive. You have a big mouth. You're verbal – you can talk. But you're not kidding God. You're changing the moral code to suit your situation, and you're defending it on the fact that this is the way it is with people. They all agree." They do this instead of standing up, and pointing the finger at them, and saying, "This is what you say by your traditions, which comes from your sin nature. But God says, 'You shall not.'" And, as Joshua said, "As far as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." And you stand up against the crowd.

"Well," you say, "I'll miss the reward that I want from them." Fine. You don't need it. You might say, "They won't elect me to office. If they're that kind of people, you don't want to serve them. If you serve that kind of people, you'll not be serving the living God. You stand with the wisdom of God. It's not so easy, is it?

Matthew 5:19, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." This is talking about the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ says that anybody who goes around, teaching people that there is justification or compromising of the moral code of God, he's going to be a latrine-keeper in the Kingdom. That is going to be his job. And then he can be big and pompous now, but out there, where everything is brought as we showed you this morning, all these differences of opinion will be resolved by God at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and in the kingdom. And there won't be any question as to what is the mind of God.

So, the Bible makes it clear that it's bad enough to believe it yourself, but for you to champion this in front of others? Notice Matthew 5:21-22: "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder, and whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. And whoever shall say to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing' shall be given before the council (the Supreme Court). And whoever shall say, 'You fool' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

Matthew 5:29, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart." So, the guilt is already there, as if the actual overt act were perform.

So, we live in a time where the corruption of God's moral code is enormous. Today, the liberal mind proceeds to establish the code of conduct like the village idiot who shoots an arrow into the side of a barn, and then proves how competent he is by going up there and drawing a target around wherever the arrow hit. That's how they determined what success is. God's moral laws are always enforced. And man receives the consequence of obedience or of disobedience to them.

Jesus Christ, Who is our example, always obeyed the father's holy code of conduct. He never compromised it. He never went along with the society of his day. But he called it to condemnation for violating that code.

1 Peter 2:21-24, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth. And while being reviled, he did not revile in turn. While suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously. And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin, and live to righteousness, for by His wounds, you are healed."

We Christians are a special breed. We are part of that special group of believers of the church age. We should not be like the world about us, in our moral code. 1 John 3:3: "And everyone who has this hope fixed in him (that is, that he is going to be transformed in God's presence someday) purifies himself just as He is pure." You want to become as much like Christ as you will someday be.

So, God's revealed wisdom of moral conduct is the way to go. Furthermore, this code of conduct applies to saved and unsaved alike. It is not unusual for some people to argue: "Well, you can't impose your code of morality on the unbeliever." Yes, you can, because this code (the code of morality) is to preserve freedom – to preserve your personal physical wellbeing, as well as the national freedom. Therefore, this code has to apply to believer and unbeliever within a society. It is God's way of enabling you to survive in Satan's world.

Biblical morality is certainly required of government leaders in order to give them the legitimate right to exercise power in ruling a nation. A government leader who does not obey the moral code of God, or creates his own exceptions, shoots the arrow in the barn, and draws his target around it, to show that he has hit the bullseye. That leader, by God's judgment, should not be permitted to continue to exercise that power of the nation. If he is, then God says, "I will step away from that nation, and the consequence of that kind of leadership will come down upon all the people. And the believers and unbelievers will suffer alike." This is morality and legitimate authority.

The United States public has been shocked currently in pessimism, disillusionment, and apathy, by a series of untrustworthy government officials in high places. He is elected into office by our accepted procedures that we hope will ensure are getting rulers with proper moral fiber, but that does not always give us the people who should be exercising power. Why not? Because the people who elect are themselves deficient in their own moral code. They are shot through with mental attitude sins. They practice the very evils that they see in some public figure, and they see no reason to condemn the public figure, because to do so is to condemn themselves.

Legitimacy to govern in a society, however, comes from respect for the basic biblical principles of morality. And those are not determined by what most people believe, but by what God has declared. Without a sense of subjection to God, and to his moral code, there can be no legitimate governing authority.

So, what do you have? You have somebody who seizes power, one way or another. That's how Mussolini came to power – not by legitimate means, but he seized power. This certainly is how the Hitler came to power. He seized it. And in our day, by deceit and misrepresentation, the tyrants continue to seize power today, because the people do not believe that the moral code of God is to be observed, and they try to say something like, "We're not a theocracy." No, we're not. That's why we don't put homosexuals and lesbians to death. We don't have that authority. God is not ruling over His own nation as such. But the condemnation of that conduct is very clear in Scripture. And that condemnation is to be recognized.

Nations in the past have changed one moral viewpoint for another, but the United States is the first of nations in all of human history, who have abandoned morality outright. And if you realize that (if you understand that), and that that abandonment is being defended even within the Christian community, you will understand the desperate condition under which this nation stands; why the judgment of God is on its way; and, why our only hope is to remember the phrase they used in the New Testament among Christians when they said: "Maranatha," which is the Aramaic word which means: "The Lord is coming." And the farther this nation drifts from the moral code of God, and the greater is the justification for that drift, the closer is the return of the Lord. You can count on it. Nations in the past have changed their moral code. But no nation has ever outrightly abandoned all sense of moral decency. That is certainly not God's wisdom.

**Do not Bear False Witness**

Now, where are we today? We have come as a nation to where there is wholesale violation of the ninth moral principle of the ten commandments for the preservation of a nation. The ninth commandment is everywhere violated, and everywhere, that violation is defended. Remember what it is. Exodus 20:16: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Why not? Because that is not wisdom. It is not the wisdom of God for you to bear false witness against your neighbor.

In Colossians 3:9, this same concept is expressed in the age of grace, as it was in the age of the theocracy. It still applies in the age of grace. Colossians 3:9 puts it this way, "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices." What this deals with in Scripture is false statements about others, and specifically, in a court of law as perjury. In the Old Testament, this statement has to do with the rule and the theocracy that, in a court of law, you must not perjure yourself. You must not tell that which is false, when the judge is seeking the truth, to deal with an issue.

In Leviticus 19:12, we are told how serious perjury is: "You shall not swear falsely by My Name, so as to profane the name of your God. I am the LORD your God. I am Jehovah." This is the most sacred name of God. "You shall not profane." Do you know what that means? It's blasphemy. You will not make false statements about your political opponents. That is an act of blasphemy against the name of God. You'll not lie in a legal procedure (where you have sworn to tell the truth), and commit perjury. God says, "That is an act of blasphemy against My character, and against Me, as the Creator God.

What is the favorite game of politicians today? It is to demonize your opponents; and, to misrepresent them. We have seen elections won by the simple procedure of saturating the media, especially television, with visual statements that were completely false about the opponents. And the opponents didn't have the money to be able to respond to, and correct it. But I have also found that, even when correction is made, people who are determined to demonize you will not change their mind. They will just blow you off. And they will continue believing the lie. The political scene today is outright lies, for what purpose? To deceive the voters in order to control them. That is rampant. And this is a violation of the second greatest divine obligation that God has put upon all human beings. "It is the second greatest commandment," Jesus said. And this demonizing of your opponents with lying, misrepresentation, and slanders, violates, not only a commandment of God against lying, but also against the second greatest commandment.

Romans 13:8-9: "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another." This is "agape" love mental attitude, free of all bitterness toward the person, whether you agree with him or not – no injury. Be willing to sacrifice yourself for the person but not to hurt: "Love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law." If you have an attitude of spiritual wellbeing, and sympathy, and considerations, and self-sacrifice, you will not violate a single one of the ten commandments. Only when there is lack of love will you do that.

**Love Your Neighbor as Yourself**

Verse nine: "For this, you shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; and, you shall not covet. And if there be any other commandments (which there are), it is summed up by this saying: you shall love your neighbor as yourself." So, to lie; to perjure; or, to demonize your opponent, is violating not only a moral code, but it also violates the second greatest commandment. The first is in Matthew 22:37: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind; with all your heart; and, with all your soul." And Jesus said, in Matthew 22:39, "The second greatest commandment that you must be careful to obey is that you treat other people the way you treat yourself." Only a fool would beat up on his own body, and on his own wellbeing. He loves himself, and he cares for himself.

Now, it is important for us to realize that God judges the slanderer who lies about the conduct; the belief; and, the intentions of others. Here again, the books of wisdom come to our assistance. Proverbs 19:5: "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape." So, when you want to play this game of misrepresenting the truth about other people, just remember that God says, "You're not going to get away with it. I will bring you down, and justice will be done."

Proverbs 19:9, "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish." So, even the life of a person is now under the divine threat, because of breaking this commandment, both on the aspect of the moral code, and on the aspect of love.

In Leviticus 19:15-18, under the theocracy of Moses, the same principles of God's righteousness were repeated: "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor defer to the great. But you are to judge your neighbor. You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people. And you are not to act against the life of your neighbor. I am the LORD." When you act against the poor, you don't give the poor special favors. God says, "There will be no affirmative action. Everybody will be treated equally. And you don't give special partiality to those who are in places of power, or to those who are great. You don't give corporation welfare."

Huge corporations get welfare from the city government. They call it "subsidies." But they're giving money to help them do their business, for some reason or other. God says, "You won't do that. You shall not hate your fellow countrymen in your heart. You may surely reprove your neighbor, but you shall not incur sin because of him." Yes, you may correct him. You may tell him where he's wrong, but you don't do it in such a way that you yourself become sinful: "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people. But you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." It's very clear. You correct, but you do it without that spirit of bitterness. You don't try to injure them. And when they will not listen to you, then you must walk away from them.

Proverbs 11:18: "The wicked earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness gets a true reward."

Psalms 101:5: "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy. No one who has a haughty look, and an arrogant heart, will I endure." God is not fond of people who have a haughty look and an arrogant heart.

Now, nowhere is slander more prominent and deceptive than in advertising, and certainly in the news media. The news media is constantly slanting the news and bearing false witness. Now, if you're one of those people who never has any other sources of information, except what comes in from the talking heads on television, then you won't know what's right and what's wrong. You'll be sucked in. But if you are a person who happens to come to a place like Berean Church where you get handouts that give you some perspective, then you will suddenly be aware that these people are lying to me. They're saying something that is not true. And yet, nobody worries about bearing false witness against someone else.

"One standard of justice," the Word of God says, "is to apply to all without the practice of jury nullification:" "I don't like to declare someone guilty that means so much to our cause." And so we have what's called "jury nullification:" They know what the law says, but they say, "Oh, because of this person's race, we won't condemn him. Because of this person's influence, we won't condemn him. Because of who this person is, we won't condemn him. Yes, he's guilty. Oh yes, it's terrible. But we will not condemn him. That's called jury nullification.

Now, where does that lead to one personally? What kind of a can of worms does that open? What does this do when you stand and look at yourself before the mirror. We have not even touched upon one of the worst places of bearing false witness. Please join us next time for that.

Dear Father, we thank You for this time this evening. We pray Your blessing upon the offerings which we bring to You. And we thank You for what we have had in the Word of God this day. Take us safely to our homes, and help us to think and to apply what we have learned. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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